VOLUNTEER MONITORING LAB ANALYSIS SUPPORT PROGRAM

2019 CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

BACKGROUND

DEQ's Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Program supports entities that voluntarily participate in water quality monitoring projects in Montana. This competitive funding opportunity helps to offset costs associated with having water quality samples analyzed by an accredited analytical laboratory. This Volunteer Monitoring Lab Analysis Support Program is a component of DEQ's Volunteer Monitoring Support Program. For more information, visit http://deq.mt.gov/water/surfacewater/monitoring or contact DEQ's Volunteer Monitoring Lab Analysis Program Manager, Katie Makarowski, at kmkarowski@mt.gov or 406-444-3507.

SCOPE

DEQ seeks applications for up to $3,000 from volunteer monitoring programs seeking financial assistance with laboratory sample analysis and shipping costs associated with water quality monitoring projects. Note: This program is for laboratory analysis and sample shipping costs only and does not include funding for Sampling and Analysis Plan (SAP) development, travel, monitoring time, purchasing and maintaining field equipment, or other operational costs.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Eligible volunteer monitoring programs must electronically submit the following application materials to DEQ's Volunteer Monitoring Lab Analysis Support Program Manager (see **Schedule** and **Resources**):
1. An application,
2. A draft Sampling and Analysis Plan (SAP)
3. A lab analysis budget that matches the requests for funds on the application and aligns with the number and type of samples described in the draft SAP and the parameter price list.

DEQ confirms eligibility of applicants, reviews application materials, provides written feedback on application materials, and competitively awards funding to selected applicants, pending DEQ's approval of a final SAP (see **Selection Criteria**).

To remain eligible for awarded funds, prior to their first sampling event awardees must:
1. Adjust draft SAPs and budgets to incorporate feedback from DEQ and resubmit their final SAP to the DEQ Volunteer Monitoring Lab Analysis Support Program Manager for approval,
2. Obtain confirmation of final SAP approval from DEQ, and
3. Sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with DEQ.

Throughout the sampling period, awardees submit approved samples and chain-of-custody forms to the approved laboratory. The laboratory analyzes the samples, DEQ receives and pays invoices from the lab for approved costs of analysis and shipping, and awardees receive electronic data deliverables (EDDs) (that is, electronic lab reports) from the lab.

Prior to the deadline (see **Schedule**), awardees must:
1. Upload all data to DEQ's MT-eWQX database,
2. Submit confirmation of data upload to DEQ's Volunteer Monitoring Lab Analysis Support Program Manager, and
3. Submit a final report to DEQ's Volunteer Monitoring Lab Analysis Support Program Manager.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible applicants may include not-for-profit non-governmental organizations, watershed groups, conservation districts, local water quality districts, academic institutions, county extension services, and county governments in Montana. To be eligible for DEQ's Volunteer Monitoring Lab Analysis Support Program funds, the following criteria must be met:

- All application materials received by 5:00 PM on the application deadline (see **Schedule**)

- Project is located in Montana within the State's jurisdictional areas

- Monitoring pertains to water quality

- Monitoring is not for profit

- Monitoring is voluntary (i.e., is not driven by a regulatory or statutory requirement such as Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination system permit monitoring, superfund, public water supplies, and water quality enforcement cases)

- Project preferably incorporates one or more person monitoring in a volunteer capacity (unpaid)

- Project has broader, community benefit (i.e., project objectives produce information about Montana's shared water resources and does not solely or primarily pertain to private water use such as individual wells or ditches)

- Applicant demonstrates capacity for project administration and technical oversight (e.g, SAP development, training, monitoring, data management and submission, quality assurance review, data analysis, final reporting)

- Project has clearly-defined monitoring objectives and a sampling and analysis plan that aligns with those objectives

- Monitoring aims to produce high quality, credible data intended for objective-driven data analysis (i.e., beyond solely for educational purposes)

- Requests for funding are exclusively for costs of laboratory analysis and shipping

SCHEDULE

Funds awarded under this Call for Applications expire February 28, 2020.

Event	Date
Call for applications	Thursday, March 7th, 2019
Application materials are due*	**5:00 PM, Friday, April 5, 2019**
DEQ notifies applicants of tentative funding award decisions (pending approval of final SAP) and sends comments on application materials	No later than Friday, April 19, 2019
Final SAP approved by DEQ	Prior to first sampling event
MOU signed by DEQ and Awardee	
Final Report and confirmation of data submission to MT-eWQX database are due*	No later than February 28, 2020

* submit electronically to DEQ VM Lab Analysis Support Program Manager

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Successful applicants must meet all terms and conditions described in this Call for Applications:

Complete Applications

All required applications materials must be submitted by the due date (see **Schedule**):
1. Application,
2. Draft Sampling and Analysis Plan (SAP), and
3. Lab analysis budget that matches the requests for funds on the application and aligns with the number and type of samples described in the draft SAP and the parameter price list.

Refer to the **application** materials on DEQ's Volunteer Monitoring page at: http://deq.mt.gov/water/surfacewater/monitoring.

Sampling and Analysis Plan (SAP)

Applicants are required to develop a SAP to guide their monitoring efforts. SAPs must include:
- Clearly articulated objectives that are measurable and achievable
- List of parameters that are suitable for the objectives; parameter list must include preferred analytical method, required reporting limits, holding time, container, and preservative.
- List of monitoring sites
- Monitoring schedule with timing and number of sampling events
- Description of type and number of quality control samples (e.g., field duplicates, field blanks)
- Description of how data will be analyzed to achieve objectives
- Budget table which indicates the number of samples that will be collected for each parameter

Refer to the **SAP template** (and supplemental guidance), as needed: http://deq.mt.gov/water/surfacewater/monitoring. Microsoft Word (or similar program) is the preferred format for SAP submittal.

DEQ provides written feedback on applicants' draft SAPs. Applicants that are awarded funding are required to modify their draft SAPs to incorporate this feedback and must obtain SAP approval from DEQ prior to the first sampling event involving lab analysis. Awardees are required to follow the final approved SAP for any samples submitted to the lab under this funding source.

Budget and Funding Request

The maximum amount of funding requested per applicant is $3,000 and funds may only be used for approved costs (analysis and shipping, approved laboratory). DEQ does not fund awardees directly but rather pays the lab for approved analytical services.

Budgets and funding requests must reflect the total number of samples for each parameter for which funds are being requested (as described in the SAP, including quality control samples such as field duplicates and field blanks) and the approved parameter and price list supplied with this Call for Applications. Refer to the **Budget Table Template** and **Volunteer Monitoring Lab Analysis Parameter Suite and Price List** at: http://deq.mt.gov/water/surfacewater/monitoring. DEQ recommends that applicants include their analytical budget as an appendix in their SAP. Microsoft Word or Excel (or similar program) is the preferred format for budget table submittal.

Note: Awardees are responsible for analytical costs incurred beyond those approved by DEQ and must work directly with the analytical lab to confirm prices and invoicing if submitting additional samples.

Approved Laboratory and Chain-Of-Custody forms

Energy Laboratories, Inc. is the service provider for lab analyses under this Call for Applications and all billing for approved analyses will be coordinated by DEQ with the lab. Upon SAP approval, awardees must contact Energy Laboratories with bottle order requests and arrange to have the lab ship coolers and sample supplies (e.g., containers and preservatives) to the group. Awardees ship or hand-deliver samples to Energy Laboratories' facility in Helena and must use Energy's Chain-of-Custody Form. Analytical results will be sent directly from the lab to the awardee.

Exceptions to using Energy Laboratories may be made on a case-by-case basis pending DEQ review of laboratory credentials, prices, and state procurement guidelines. If an applicant requests use of an alternate lab, it is incumbent on the applicant to provide the DEQ Volunteer Monitoring Lab Analysis Support Program Manager with adequate information to approve the alternate lab, including accreditation credentials, parameter list with analytical method, required reporting limits, prices, and confirmation that the lab can prepare EDDs in accordance with DEQ's data management requirements.

Data Submission

All data that is produced using these funds must be uploaded by the awardee to DEQ's MT-eWQX water quality database by the deadline (see **Schedule**) and awardees must submit confirmation of data upload to DEQ's Volunteer Monitoring Lab Analysis Support Program Manager. Instructions for data submittal: http://deq.mt.gov/Water/SurfaceWater/SubmitData.

Final Report

Awardees are required to submit a final report to DEQ's Volunteer Monitoring Support Program Manager by the deadline (see **Schedule**). The final report must include:
- A brief summary of completed field activities, including a summary of site visits
- A list of final monitoring sites
- A comparison of planned sampling (as described in the SAP) to actual completed sampling, and an explanation of differences (if any)

- A summary of data and results
- A summary of how the data was analyzed
- A description of how the data was used to achieve the objectives described in the SAP

Quality Assurance and Quality Control (QA/QC)

Sampling activities must follow QA/QC activities described in the approved SAP, including training, sample collection procedures, laboratory analyses, field duplicates and field blanks).

SELECTION CRITERIA

Decisions to award funds will be informed by the following criteria:

- Results of the project will be used toward positive improvements in water quality.
- The project pertains to nonpoint source pollution reductions.
- The application and SAP clearly articulates measurable and achievable monitoring objectives.
- The SAP describes in sufficient detail a monitoring design which is suitable to the stated objectives (e.g., proposed monitoring parameters and timing of sample collection are appropriate for the intended analysis).
- The application identifies specific question(s) about water quality that data will be used to answer.
- The applicant has identified how the laboratory results will be analyzed to address the study questions.
- Results of the project will be shared with the appropriate audiences.
- This project aligns with larger watershed scale planning.
- The applicant has the appropriate experience and/or technical assistance to implement the type of project for which funding is requested.
- The applicant has taken appropriate steps to successfully facilitate monitoring this year.

RESOURCES

The following resources are available on DEQ's Volunteer Monitoring page:
http://deq.mt.gov/water/surfacewater/monitoring

- Call for Applications
- Application
- SAP template
- Volunteer Monitoring Lab Analysis Parameter Suite and Price List
- Budget Table Template
- Link to data submittal instructions